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the amount of the one or more natural isomers of reduced folate.

77. A method according to claim 73 or 75 wherein the essential nutrient preparation further comprises ascorbic acid.

78. A method according to claim 73, 74 or 75, wherein each of the one or more natural isomers of reduced folate is substantially chirally pure.

79. A method according to claim 73, 74 or 75, wherein the one or more natural isomers of reduced folate is selected from the group consisting of 5-methyl-(6S)-tetrahydrofolic acid, 5-formyl-(6S)-tetrahydrofolic acid, 5,10-methenyl-(6R)-tetrahydrofolic acid, and polyglutamyl derivatives thereof.

80. A method according to claim 73 or 74, wherein the method further comprises incorporating a vitamin into the food preparation.

81. A method for increasing an animal subject's dietary intake of folate, the animal selected from the group consisting of dog, cat, poultry, cattle, goat, horse, mink, fox, and sheep, the method comprising:

administering a composition according to claim 67, 68 or 69 to the animal subject.

82. A method according to claim 81, wherein said administering is carried out by enteral administration.

#### REMARKS

The subject application is the U.S. national stage of PCT International Application No. PCT/US97/01870. In the PCT application, the application as originally filed included claims 1-26. In the Response to Written Opinion, claims 4 and 21-23 were canceled, claims 1, 12, 19 and 24-26 were amended, and claims 27-44 were added. The International Preliminary Examination Report was therefore directed to claims 1-3, 5-20 and 24-44. Claims 3, 6-8, 11, 24, 29, 31 (indicated as 30 by

the Examiner, but appears to be 31), 34 and 44 were indicated as meeting the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(2)-(4).

By this preliminary amendment, claims 1-3, 5-20 and 24-44 have been canceled, and replaced with new claims 45-82. New claims 45, 46 and 49 incorporate the limitations of canceled claims 3, 6 and 11 (which were indicated as free of the prior art). New claims 47, 48, 51-56, 58-61 and 63-66 are composition and method claims of similar scope to new claims 45, 46 and 49. New claims 67, 68 and 69 incorporate the limitations of canceled claims 29, 31 and 34 (which were indicated as free of the prior art). New claims 70-82 are composition and method claims of similar scope to new claims 67, 68 and 69.

It is believed that these amendments have addressed the issues raised in the International Preliminary Examination Report, and that all claims now pending (claims 45-82) define patentable subject matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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